

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 7 are cancelled.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An electrically activated switching valve for a high pressure pump, comprising:

a valve stem holding a valve member interacting with a valve seat on a valve housing wherein said valve stem is positioned between a high pressure line and a return flow duct of said high pressure pump;

a valve spring providing a force in a first direction on said valve;

a valve guide for guiding said valve stem in said valve housing;

an activating device which, when activated, provides a force in a direction opposite said first direction to axially move said valve stem and said valve member in said valve housing and said valve member interacting with said valve seat on said valve housing to thereby determine flow from said high pressure line through said valve;

an annular space formed between said valve guide and said valve member, said annular space providing a contact area between the valve member and the valve seat ~~which wherein said contact area~~ is bounded on one side by a step adjoined by a flow optimizing guide surface configured to avoid cavitation resulting from said flow from said high pressure line through said valve.

9. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The valve according to claim 8, wherein the step and the guide surface are arranged on the valve member.

10. (WITHDRAWN) The valve according to Claim 8, wherein said step is formed by an edge of the valve member wherein said edge is surrounded by a separate baffle element which is connected to one of the valve housing and a stop which limits an opening stroke of the valve member.

11. (WITHDRAWN) The valve according to Claim 10, wherein said baffle element has radially oriented drainage passages for connecting a space adjoining the valve member to a return passage.

12. (WITHDRAWN) The valve according to one of Claims 10, wherein drainage passages are provided between the stop and the valve member.

13. (WITHDRAWN) The valve according to Claim 10, wherein the baffle element is secured on the valve housing by means of guide vanes which are arranged downstream of the baffle element.

14. (WITHDRAWN) The valve according to one of Claim 10, wherein the baffle element is formed on the stop and drainage passages are formed by holes.

15-21. (CANCELED).

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An electrically actuated switching valve for a high pressure pump, comprising:

a valve stem holding a valve member interacting with a valve seat on a valve housing wherein said valve stem is positioned between a high pressure line and a return duct of said high pressure pump;

a valve spring providing a force in a first direction on said valve stem and said valve member;

a valve guide for guiding said valve stem in an inner circumferential opening of said valve housing;

an activating device which, when actuated provides a force in a direction opposite said first direction to axially move said valve stem and said valve member in said circumferential opening of said valve housing wherein said valve member interacts with said valve seat on said valve housing to thereby determine flow from said high pressure line through said valve and;

wherein said valve member has a step portion formed at a portion of said valve member having a radius defined by an offset in a radius of the valve member which exceeds a radius of said inner circumferential opening of said valve housing and wherein said step portion is adjoined by a flow optimizing guide surface configured to avoid cavitation resulting from said flow from said high pressure line through said valve.

23. (WITHDRAWN) The valve according to claim 8 wherein the step is arranged on an edge of the valve member.

24. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The valve according to claim 8, wherein said flow optimizing guide surface is formed directly on the valve member.

25. (WITHDRAWN) The valve according to claim 8, wherein said flow optimizing guide surface is formed on a valve stop.

26. (WITHDRAWN) The valve according to claim 22, wherein the step is arranged on an edge of the valve member.

27. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The valve according to claim 22, wherein said flow optimizing guide surface is formed directly on the valve member.

28. (WITHDRAWN) The valve according to claim 22, wherein said flow optimizing guide surface is formed on a valve stop.